00962

1963/09/06

SECRET/LIMIT DISTRIBUTION
NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY

COPIES TO: [illegible]

REVIEWED BY CCF DATE 1/29/87

RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSEMENT MARKINGS
DECLASSIFY IN X RELASABLE
[illegible]

TO : The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM : INR - Thomas L. Hughes

SEP 6 1963

SUBJECT: State of Mind of the Nhus

Two intelligence reports received today reflect the heightened contempt which Ngo Dinh Nhu, his wife, and other close confidants of the Ngo family hold for the United States as a result of recent developments in South Vietnam.

1. The first report (TDCS DB-3/656,446) relates to an interview of Madame Nhu's brother, Tran Van Khiem, on August 31 by Denis Warner, a reliable Australian correspondent. Warner informed an American official that Khiem showed him a list of United States Embassy, USIS, USOM, and MACV personnel he was planning to assassinate. Warner indicated that the assassination of Americans would result in the landing of United States Marines within hours to which Khiem replied that there are 20,000 Vietnamese troops in Saigon to meet this eventuality. However, Khiem seemed impressed with Warner's counter that a division of Marines would quickly wipe out any opposing forces.

We do not think that the Vietnamese Government would at this time sanction such acts against American officials. However, we can expect that the current anti-American campaign as reflected in the government-controlled press and in official statements will continue; anti-American rallies or demonstrations are also possible. Khiem is the brother of Madame Nhu, and his own father, the former Vietnamese Ambassador to Washington, Tran Van Chuong, has denounced him as incompetent, corrupted, and cowardly. The last we have heard of Khiem was on August 11 when Secretary of State for the Presidency Thuan informed Ambassador Nolting that Madame Nhu had organized her own secret police squad headed by Khiem. Thuan stated that Nhu himself was possibly also involved. Nolting subsequently raised this point with Diem -- the latter denied it flatly. The above report would indicate that Khiem may actually have some "special security" responsibilities and that Diem was either lying or had been kept ignorant of the development.

2. The second report (TDCS DB-3/656,445) relates to the September 2 article in Times of Vietnam which charged the United States, and specifically the Central Intelligence Agency, with an attempt to inspire a coup. On September 5, the First Secretary of the German Embassy, passing on information given to him by a Der Speigel correspondent who had interviewed Madame Nhu, told an American official that Madame Nhu admitted she had written

Exempted from automatic downgrading and declassification

SECRET/LIMIT DISTRIBUTION
NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

most, if not all, of the article. She is reported to have also stated that most of South Vietnam's troubles resulted from false reporting by the American press and from American interference. She even charged that Ambassador Lodge was planning to have her removed or murdered. She added that Diem was too weak and was dependent upon her for support and strength to carry out the struggle against the Viet Cong and other enemies.

We have suspected that the Times of Vietnam article was written, or at least inspired, by the Nhus. Of course, Madame Nhu is aware that we want her to leave, and she probably feels she would be a main target in any coup attempt against the regime. Her statement on Diem recalls a similar public statement of hers about a month ago and one which touched Diem on a very sensitive point.

Attachments:
1. TDCS DB-3/656,446
2. TDCS DB-3/656,445

1963 SEP 9 AM 11:23

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

INR/RFE:ASWhiting:[illegible]
9/6/63

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS